THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN) : (a) and (b) Development and modernisation of airports is a continuous process depending upon the traffic requirements, availability of funds, availability of land etc. and the works are undertaken in a phased manner.

(c) Modern equipments such as Doppler Very High frequency Omni Range (DVOR), Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) have been installed at Jabalpur Airport.

(d) There is a proposal to extend the length of the runway to 7500 feet at Bhopal airport to enable operation of AB-320 type of aircraft for which State Government has been approached for necessary land.

SC/ST and OBC candidates selected in the Ministry of Civil Aviation

2283. SHRI ANANTA SETHI : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether as provided under para 11 of Explanatory Notes to DOPT OM No. 36012/2/96-Estt. (Res.) dated the 2nd July, 1997 persons belonging to SC/ST and OBC selected on merit are not required to be shown against the quota of vacancies/posts reserved for their communities; and

(b) if so, the total number of persons belonging to SC, ST and OBC selected/ recruited/promoted on merit to different categories of services and not counted against the reserved quota of vacancies/posts for their communities during the last three years under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A total of 195 SC, 52 ST and 93 OBC candidates have been selected/ recruited/promoted on merit to different categories of services and not counted against the reserved quota of vacancies/posts for their communities during the last three years in the Ministry of Civil Aviation and its various organisations.

Offloading of passengers due to overbooking by AI

2284. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that due to overbookings by Air India passengers having confirmed tickets have to be offloaded many times;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to avoid such situation and organise it properly?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN) : (a) to (c) In keeping with international airline's practice, Air India overbooks flights to ensure they operate to optimum capacity. At times, however, passengers having confirmed tickets are offloaded which is a risk that has to be taken by any airline. Such passengers are given top most priority, all arrangements are made by Air India for their boarding and lodging and they are accepted on the next flight. Air India has recently implemented an automated revenue management system which stores historical data on flight performance and recommends optimal overbooking levels using sophisticated, statistical techniques. Moreover, in the peak season, extra flights are allowed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

Increase in air fares

†2285. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplating to increase air fares;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what percentage of increase in air fares is likely to be made?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN) : (a) to (c) Indian Airlines has, with the approval of the Government, adopted a Flexible Fare Policy w. e. f. 25th May, 2001. The Flexible Fare Policy enables Indian Airlines to consider fare variations (increase or decrease) on sector to sector' and 'season to season' basis depending on a variety of factors including market size / share, price sensitivity and other market related factors . With the Flexi Fare Policy an endeavour has been made to make the fares market based .

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.